

1976

Subscription

Nicolas Born

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Born, Nicolas. "Subscription." *The Iowa Review* 7.2 (1976): 49-50. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2039>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Dove

Suddenly, I clenched my right fist and slammed it very cruelly against the left. "Smack!" Ah, how abstracted and secluded the wilderness is. In the almost sick sky, a flock of doves are flying. Are they flying singly or in pairs?

I use my left hand to heavily grasp the gradually loosening right fist; the fingers slowly unfold, but they can't straighten; just can urgently turn from side to side. Ah, you worked and still work; you killed and will be killed; blameless hands! Now, you are just like a wounded bird. In the dizzy sky, a flock of doves are flying over. Are they flying singly or in pairs?

Now, I use my left hand to very softly caress the quivering red hand. My left hand is also quivering; even more like a brokenhearted bird, grieving for its wounded partner. Then, I still use my right hand to softly caress the left hand. . . . Flying in the sky, now, probably is a hawk.

In the anaemic sky, no birds at all. Ah, to rely on each other and quivering; worked and still work; killed and be killed; blameless hands! Now, I will lift you. I really wish—to liberate you just like a couple of cured birds —I will liberate you from my wrists.

Translated by the author with William Golightly

N I C O L A S B O R N / W E S T G E R M A N Y

Subscription

A lot happens inside these walls
I've painted over some of it.
The papers bring in heat and unrest
I crawl through the news ready to faint.

Exhausted by ways of dying
and filled with soup

I get ready for the evening edition.
 Blackened and sore from reading and leafing pages
I haven't gained much
from buying the world's lies
every day for pennies.
 I have a subscription
to piles of misfortune and revolution
reports of garden shows shake me up.

Inheritance

From one side of the family one thing
from the other another.
There's no end to the losses.
So far I keep going:
 I wash my shirts
 I wash my socks
 I wash my arms my legs.
Whichever way I turn
whether I lie down crooked
or stand—I look like myself.
I devote hours to myself
days to the furniture
I eat fruit and stay healthy.
I make love seldom, seldom
steal in the discount store,
I save one shave a week
with Gillette Blue Blades.
I'm no good by myself
the number of chairs here proves it
and the household keeps growing.
The need for acquisitions
grows on its own.
From one side of the family one thing
the rest from the other.
I've added nothing.

Translated by Erik Torgersen